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Message Text

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10
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-06 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00 USIA-15

EB-07 IO-10 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 PM-03 MED-03 PER-03

/098 W
---------- 110145
R 281945Z JUL 75
FM AMCONSUL RECIFE
TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
SECSTATE WASHDC 5574
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMCONSUL BELEM
AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE
TEN/AMCONSUL SALVADOR 0141

UNCLAS RECIFE 0126

E.O. 71652:N/A
TAGS:SWEL BR
SUBJECT:RECIFE'S FLOOD AND THE RELIEF EFFORT

1. ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE SEVERAL MORE WEEKS BEFORE ALL DAMAGE CREATED BY THE FLOODS OF JULY 17-18 CAN BE PROPERLY ASSESSED, THE CITY OF RECIFE AND SURROUNDING AREAS OF PERNAMBUCO STATE HAVE BEGUN TO DIG OUT FROM UNDER THE LAYERS OF MUD, TO REPAIR WHERE FEASIBLE, AND TO REBUILD WHERE NECESSARY.

2. LOSS OF LIFE WAS FORTUNATELY RELATIVELY LOW -- AN ESTIMATED 150 DEAD. FOR THIS CREDIT GOES TO THE STATE CIVIL DEFENSE ORGNI-ZATION WHICH GAVE EARLY WARNING OF THE APPROACHING FLOOD WATERSGM THE FLOOD'S VOLUME AND SAVAGE CURRENT CAME AS A SURPRISE, HOWEVERGN AND ACCOUNTED FOR EXTENSIVE PROPERTY AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION DAMAGE.

3. CONSULATE PREMISES FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY WERE INVADED
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BY ONE AND ONE HALF TO THREE FEET OF WATER, BRINGING IN ITS WAKE

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CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO FURNISHINGS, TELEPHONE AND TELEX SYSTEMSGN
OFFICIAL VEHICLES, WAREHOUSE STOCKS, EMERGENCY GENERATOR, AND THE
BUILDINGS FLOORS AND WALLS.

4. CONSULATE AMERICAN PERSONNEL, WHILE ISOLATED BECAUSE ON RAGING
WATERS AND TELEPHONE FAILURES, WERE SPARED HEAVY DAMAGE THAT
VISITED MOST OF THE POPULATION. OUR SECRETARY/COMMUNICATOR, MARY
SCHENK, LOST A GOOD DEAL OF HER PERSONAL EFFECTS BUT WAS ABLE TO
SAVE MANY OF THE MORE VALUABLE HHE.

5. SEVERAL OF THE CONSULATE'S BRAZILIAN EMPLOYEES LOST ALL ON
THEIR FURNISHINGS AND CLOTHING AS FLOOD WATERS POURED INTO HOUSES
REACHING AS HIGH AS NINE FEET IN MANY AREAS.

6. AS WE ENDEAVOR TO LITERALLY DIG OURSELVES OUT AND PUT OUR
OPERATIONS BACK IN EFFICIENT RUNNING ORDER, WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED
VALUABLE AID AND ASSISTANCE FROM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA, WHICH IS
RESPONDING SPEEDILY AND FULLY TO OUR NEEDS. FOR THIS WE ARE
GRATEFUL.

7. TO MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF THOSE IN RECIFE AND SURROUNDING
AREAS MADE HOMELESS BY THE FLOOD, WE WORKED WITH STATE AUTHORITIES
TO ASSESS EXTENT OF DISASTER. ONCE AGAIN THE RESPONSE OF AMEMBASSY
BRASILIA AND ITS DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE WAS EXTRAORDINARY.
OUR URGENT TRANSMITTAL TO THE EMBASSY OF REQUESTS FOR BEDS,
BLANKETS AND OTHER BADLY NEEDED ITEMS WERE ATTENDED TO WITH ADMIRABLE
AND GENEROUS RESPONSIVENESS.

8. THE FINAL DECISION, AGREED TO BY THE DEPARTMENT, TO TRANSPORT
BY AIR FROM THE CANAL ZONE THE 10,000 BLANKETS, 10,000 SHEETS
THE 1776 COTS, AND THE PENICILIN WAS INDEED VIEWED HERE AS AN
ACT OF GREAT GENEROSITY AND COMPASSION FOR THOSE LHO SUFFERED
THE GREATEST LOSES. THIS, ALONG WITH AMBASSADOR CRIMMINS'
DECISION TO RELEASE THE US DOLLARS 25,000 DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS,
WENT A LONG WAY TOWARD FILLING SOME IMPORTANT EMERGENCY NEEDS
WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE UNABLE
TO MEET.

9. WE WERE ALL PROUD OF THE RESPONSE AND NOTED THAT WITH THE
ARRIVAL OF THE C-130 USAF TRANSPORTS ON JULY 26, THE LOCAL STATE
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REPRESENTATIVE AT THE AIRPORT TO RECEIVE THE MATERIALS EXPRESSED
HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE ASSISTANCE. THOUGH IT WILL TAKE
CONSIDERABLE TIME AND RESOURCES TO REBUILD, THE MOST URGENT MEDICAL,
FOOD AND HOUSING NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE HARDEST HIT ARE BEING ATTENDED.
THE US CONTRIBUTION IN THIS EXTENSIVE RELIEF EFFORT PLAYED AN
IMPORTANT PART. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR EMBASSY BRASILIA'S AND THE
DEPARTMENT'S ROLE IN THE TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE.

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10. NINETY MINUTES BEFORE THE ARRIVAL ON THE C-130 TRANSPORTS IN THEIR THIRTEEN HOUR MARATHON FLIGHT TO RECIFE ON JULY 26, ANOTHER ARRIVAL WAS DULY MARKED. A HEALTHY SEVEN POUND JUSTIN HAMILTON BROWN ACCOMMODATED HIS PARENTS TO ARRIVE ENOUGH TIME IN ADVANCE TO PERMIT HIS DAD TO MEET THE AIR TRANSPORTS AND HELP DELIVER THE ASSISTANCE MATERIALS. WE ARE ENORMOUSLY PROUD OF HIM FOR, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HIS EXCELLENT SENSE ON TIMING.
BROWN

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